

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1808

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

USMTM DHAHRAN SAUDI ARABIA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T MANAMA 0089

LIMDIS

SECDEF FOR MR. CLEMENTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR,BA

SUBJECT : MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN; SAG DESIRE FOR
NAVAL TRAINING

REF : JIDDA 0398

1. EMBASSY JIDDA'S SUGGESTION (REFTEL) STRIDES US AS NOTABLY
IMAGINATIVE AND HELPFUL. ITS ULTIMATE FEASIBILITY IS A
MATTER FOR OTHER ADDRESSES TO DECIDE ON THE BASIS OF CON-
SIDERATIONS BEYOND OUR KEN.

2. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE POLITICAL IMPACT IN BAHRAIN,
AND HENCE BAHRAIN'S WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE PERMITTING THE
U.S. NAVY PRESENCE HERE, THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS MIGHT BE
HELPFUL:

(A) ASSUMING WE GET OVER OUR PRESENT CRISIS RE MIDDLE EAST
FORCE STATUS SUCCESSFULLY AND QUICKLY, THE PRESENCE OF
MIDDLE EAST FORCE WILL NONETHELESS BE CONTINUOUSLY HOSTAGE

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TO ARAB POLITICAL REACTIONS;

(B) IN MEETING CRITICISM IN THE AREA AND AT HOME, THE GOB WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO CITE SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFITS "THE ARAB GULF" DERIVES FROM U.S. NAVY PRESENCE.

(C) A TANGIBLE SAUDI BENEFIT THROUGH TRAINING OF SAUDI NAVAL PERSONNEL WOULD BE PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE TO GOB, WHICH REALISTICALLY RECOGNIZES BAHRAIN'S SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN AND FOR OBVIOUS COSMETIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL/HISTORIC REASONS GIVES PUBLIC STRESS TO THE SAUDI SIDE OF THAT SOMETIMES DIFFICULT EQUATION.

(D) THUS EVEN IF A MIDEASTFORCE/SAUDI TRAINING RELATIONSHIP NEVER LED TO OPEN (OR STRONGER PRIVATE) SAUDI SUPPORT FOR U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN (AND WE ARE NOT CERTAIN IT WOULD), GOB WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO SEE IT DEVELOP, AND TO CITE IT TO CRITICS.

(E) THE PITFALL WE SHOULD CONSIDER, WITH NO EXAGGERATED WEIGHT, IS THE QUESTION CRITICS OF THE U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN WILL INEVITABLY RAISE: IF THE SAUDIS ARE OSTENSIBLE BENEFICIARIES OF THE U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN THE GULF, WHY IS THE U.S. NAVY PRESENT IN BAHRAIN, AND NOT IN SAUDI ARABIA?

TWINAM

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NNN

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